

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

By this Amendment, claims 61-78 are canceled and claims 33 and 52 are amended. Claims 33-60 are pending.

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the statement in the Office Action at page 2 that claims 34-35, 39-44, 46-48, 50, 55, 56, 58, 59, 64, 65, 68-75 and 77 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing amendments and the following remarks place all of the pending claims in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 33, 36-38, 45, 49, 51-54, 57, 60-63, 66-67, 76 and 78 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,566,293 ("Arner"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Base claims 33 and 52 require an at least partially open protective-gas storage container from which liquified protective gas outgases into the protective container. The claims have been amended to clarify that the protective-gas storage container is inside the protective container. Support for the amendments is apparent in the specification at, e.g., Fig. 1.

Arner does not teach or suggest these features of the pending claims. As noted in Arner at column 3, lines 46-59:

Floor 15 of freeze box 10 is provided with a purge inlet tube 24 that is hermetically sealed within an opening within floor 15 and communicates with the interior of freeze box 10, and a purge outlet tube 25 that is hermetically sealed within an opening within floor 15 and communicates with the interior of freeze box 10. As shown in FIG. 1, purge inlet tube 24 is located closely adjacent to side wall 11 while purge outlet tube 25 is located closely adjacent to side wall 12 so that a purging gas (dry nitrogen gas) can be admitted at one end of freeze box 10 and be withdrawn at the opposite end of freeze box 10 to purge the interior of freeze box 10 of moisture when the freeze box 10 is in operation (as will be explained more fully hereinafter).

Thus, Arner teaches a purging gas source outside the protective container (freeze box 10), wherein the purging gas is conveyed from the source through purge inlet tube 24 into freeze box 10, and does not anticipate claims requiring an at least partially open protective-gas storage

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container being arranged in the protective container. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the anticipation rejection are respectfully requested.

For at least the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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